up the matter with the foreign employers/sponsors or their Indian agents. Generally, the grievances are redressed with the cooperation of the employers and concerned foreign government/agencies. In cases of dispute, the matter is sought to be resolved through the labour courts in the foreign country concerned.

(c) The number of Indian workers repatriated to India during the last three years, as per available information, is as follows:—

1998	:	17062
1999	:	11152
2000	:	19862

Problems Faced by Refugees

1271. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 6,000 Afghanis, including a large number of Hindus and Sikhs, living in the country as refugees, are facing numerous problems;

(b) whether Government have offered that "in case the remaining minority population of Afghanistan desires to come to India, they would be willing to accept them";

(c) whether the Government have discussed with the opposition parties about the refugees' problem;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) On account of continuing civil conflict in Afghanistan a large number of Afghan nationals including those of Indian origin are presently living in India. In keeping with our traditional policy of friendship towards the people of Afghanistan all Afghan nationals, including those of Indian origin, who came to India with valid travel documents/ passports are being allowed to stay unhindered. We continue to treat all Afghan nationals in India with consideration and sympathy. Visa

applications for all Afghan nationals including those of Indian origin are being considered on a case by case basis.

(b) In a press conference on 28th May, 2001, External Affairs Minister had said that all those who do not subscribe to the idea of Taliban and leave Afghanistan and ask India for temporary shelter would be provided with a shelter.

(c) to (e) As in all cases, Government's policies are formulated keeping in mind the views expressed in Parliament.

Indo-Iranian Talks

1272. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the talks held between the Prime Minister and the Iranian dignataries and the agreements/protocols signed by the Indian and Iranian authorities during the Prime Minister's visit to Iran in April, 2001;

(b) whether the visit talks and the agreements/protocol pacts signed in Iran during the aforesaid visit would strengthen mutual economic and political relations between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Prime Minister paid an official visit to Iran, a country with which India shares deep historical ties and civilisational and cultural affinities, from 10-13 April, 2001. During Prime Minister's visit both sides discussed issues relating to cooperation on bilateral, regional and international matters. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the strengthening and deepening of consultations and to enhancing coordination on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual